United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, Security Council extends mandate of United Nations Protection Force in former Yugoslavia until 31 March to allow for peace negotiations to continue; demands full compliance with United Nations peace plan in Croatia and invites Secretary-General to reinforce Force's self-defence capability; Council to meet on Monday, 22 February, on establishment of international tribunal for war crimes.

+ Secretary-General is in contact with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees with a view to ensuring immediate resumption of humanitarian relief programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ In Haiti, Secretary-General's Special Envoy to begin political dialogue as soon as deployment of additional United Nations observers is complete.

+ United Nations appeals to international community for $762 million in humanitarian aid for Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Sudan.

+ Major-General Lélio Gonçalves Rodrigues da Silva of Brazil appointed Force Commander of United Nations Operation in Mozambique.

+ International Year of Indigenous Peoples commemorated by Commission on Human Rights.

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The Security Council today voted unanimously to extend the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in former Yugoslavia for an interim period until 31 March to allow for peace negotiations, especially with regard to the recent Croatian offensive, which could provide a basis for renewing the Force's mandate.

The Council took that action by adopting resolution 807 (1993) under which it demanded that the parties and others concerned honour the cease-fire and comply fully with the United Nations peace-keeping plan in Croatia.

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Determined to ensure the security of UNPROFOR and, to this end, acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter - which allows the use of force to maintain international peace and security - the Council also demanded that the parties refrain from positioning their forces in the proximity of UNPROFOR's units in the United Nations Protected Areas and in the so-called "pink zones" -- Serb-controlled parts of Croatia.

The Council also demanded that the parties respect fully UNPROFOR's unimpeded freedom of movement enabling it to carry out all movements of equipments and weapons and all humanitarian and logistical activities. It further invited the Secretary-General to take all appropriate measure to strengthen the security of UNPROFOR, in particular by providing it with the necessary defensive means.

In an earlier report to the Council, the Secretary-General has warned that the situation could lead to large-scale hostilities if UNPROFOR was withdrawn from the region and has asked Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, Co-Chairmen of the Yugoslav Conference, to make recommendations concerning UNPROFOR's future mandate.

At present, the Force is principally deployed in three Republics -- Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia. The Force's current mandate also extends to Serbia and Montenegro and it has a liaison presence in Slovenia. Over the past year, the Force has grown considerably in number and in the range and. It carried out a large variety of tasks since its was established last February.

Meanwhile, Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, the Co-Chairmen of the Yugoslav Conference, continued their talks at Headquarters today with the parties to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Talks today concerned the situation in Krajina and involved the Krajina Serbs, Croatian authorities, the Co-Chairment and the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation.

In a separate development, it was announced tonight that the Council would convene on Monday, 22 February, to consider the establishment of an international tribunal for crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali announced today that he was in contact with the High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, with a view to ensuring the immediate resumption of the humanitarian relief programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The programme was suspended on Wednesday due to failure of all parties to respect humanitarian principles in the region.

In a statement issued at Headquarters, he said it was "imperative" that all parties involved comply fully and immediately with the Security Council's appeal earlier this week for unimpeded access of humanitarian convoys to the civilian population in the region.

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The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Haiti, Dante Caputo, is expected to begin the political dialogue as soon as the deployment of additional observers to the country in the coming weeks is completed.

According to a United Nations spokesman today, the first joint teams of the Organization of American States (OAS) and United Nations observers arrived in Haiti last Sunday. Their leaders have indicated that their initial activities had taken took place normally, including the deployment of the observers to areas outside the capital of Port-au-Prince.

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The United Nations today launched four special appeals to the international community totalling $762 million for humanitarian assistance to Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and the Sudan, according to a press release issued by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

The appeal includes $80.5 million for Eritrea, $299.9 million for Ethiopia, $191.2 million for Kenya and $189.8 million for the Sudan. Each appeal represents an integrated inter-agency programme for the next one-year period. The amount of the identified humanitarian requirements for 1993 should be $970 million inferior to that of last year, as a result of improved harvests.

In Ethiopia, relief assistance will be provided to some 5 million, including refugees fleeing the conflict in Somalia and those displaced by local insecurity. Eritrea, the press release says, is benefiting from a period of sustained peace after over 25 years of war. A better-than-average harvest following drought, however, will only meet half of the food requirements of the country.

In spite of recent rains in Kenya, major drought relief efforts are still needed and the continuing drought is affecting 1.5 million people. In addition, the country is hosting more than 400,000 refugees, mostly from Somalia. In the Sudan, the conflict in the south, which has resulted in 1.7 million displaced persons, continues to create massive relief needs and makes access to the affected populations difficult and dangerous.

The 1993 programme for relief and rehabilitation requirements in Somalia was being prepared and would be submitted to a Conference on Humanitarian Assistance for Somalia, to be held in Addis Ababa from 11 to 13 March, the release added.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has appointed Major-General Lélio Gonçalves Rodrigues da Silva of Brazil as Force Commander of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ), with effect from 13 February.

Major-General da Silva joined the Brazilian Armed Forces in 1955. He is presently commander of the Third Division of the Brazilian Army. During his

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military career, General da Silva has led and taken part in official and technical visits and missions to the United Kingdom, France and Sweden, as well as to various countries in North and South America.

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The indigenous people were among the most maltreated in society, whether they lived in rich or poor countries, said Antoine Blanca, Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights and Coordinator for the International Year of the World's Indigenous People (1993).

Speaking at a special session of the Commission in Geneva, dedicated to the year-long United Nations celebration of the contributions and cultures of indigenous peoples, Mr Blanca said the International Year should mark the beginning of a new and more fruitful partnership between them, their host countries and the international community.

Rigoberta Menchu, a member of the Quiche tribe of Guatemala and winner of the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize, called on the Commission and the United Nations to take practical measures to support the human rights and cultures of indigenous peoples, and to provide them greater official access to United Nations bodies and activities. She also expressed the hope that the Nobel Prize would serve as an opportunity to break the world's silence on the terrible plight of indigenous peoples. The observance of the International Year was the first time the attention of the Organization had been focused directly and solely on indigenous people, she said.

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